Metanoia

Philippians 3:13 ... but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Forgetting: This is not such an easy matter that any simpleton might bring it off with three snaps of a finger and a blank stare. There is no more serious question for one's personal destiny than what he ought to remember and what he might with impunity forget--especially in view of Christ's words that there is nothing hidden which shall not be made plain. How one performs the most trifling social act might well reflect that he is indeed making his peace with the eternal; yet, on the other hand, the most august and ceremonial performance can be undertaken rote and bereft of all pathos. One could with impunity forget the former--not because it was trivial but because he perceived the task in that situation and met it with all his being attuned to it. At his peril he forgets how he abused the latter. It is the very occasion he ought to remember yet cannot since, at the time, he willed not to be self-present and attuned to his own activity, namely, his task.

This one thing I do: One thing. The apostle does not begin by forgetting--in order to do something else. This trying to begin something new by first forgetting something old is sheer worldliness, if not ungodliness. The act of trying to forget is effort centered always on illusion. The trying makes all the more present what one wishes to forget. Some things confront us as happenings we do not accept, even great shocks, and these we sometimes forget. Psychologically these are of much importance. Spiritually, they are not. But things we ought not to have done which we allowed

ourselves to do--these must be brought instantly to prayer for forgiveness, whether before God or our fellow men or both. They ought not to be forgotten.

No, precisely because this "one thing" is done, this "reaching forth unto those things which are before", this "pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"--precisely because this one thing is done, and this one thing only, first, currently and last, is it possible to forget with impunity whatever it is proper to forget.